AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A zoom lens system comprising a negative first lens group, a positive second lens group, and a positive third lens group, in this order from an object,

wherein said negative first lens group ~~comprises~~ consists of a negative meniscus lens element having the convex surface facing toward said object, and said positive third lens group comprises a positive biconvex lens element;

wherein upon zooming from the short focal length extremity to the long focal length extremity, at least said negative first lens group and said positive second lens group are moved;

wherein a diaphragm is provided on the object side of said positive second lens group, and moves integrally therewith; and

wherein said zoom lens system satisfies the following conditions:

$0.25 < R1/D1 < 0.55$

$0.25 < f2/TL < 0.45$

wherein

R1 designates the radius of curvature of the image-side surface of said negative meniscus lens element, which constitutes said negative first lens group;

D1 designates the distance between said negative first lens group and said positive

second lens group at the short focal length extremity;

f2 designates the focal length of said positive second lens group; and

TL designates the distance along the optical axis from the most object-side surface of said negative first lens group to the most image-side surface of said positive third lens group, at the short focal length extremity.

2. (Original) The zoom lens system according to claim 1, wherein said positive second lens group comprises a positive lens element having a convex surface facing toward said object, and cemented lens elements having a positive lens element and a negative lens element, in this order from said object,

wherein the most image-side surface of said positive second lens group comprises a divergent surface; and

wherein the zoom lens system satisfies the following condition:

$0.5 < R2/fw < 1.0$

wherein

fw designates the focal length of the entire the zoom lens system at the short focal length extremity; and

R2 designates the radius of curvature of the most image-side surface of said positive second lens group.

3. (Original) The zoom lens system according to claim 1, wherein upon zooming from the short focal length extremity to the long focal length extremity, said negative first lens group monotonously moves toward an image, said positive second lens group monotonously moves toward said object, and said positive third lens group integrally moves with said positive second lens group; and

wherein said zoom lens system satisfies the following conditions:

$2.2 < |f1/fw| < 3.0$

$1.0 < f3/fw < 1.9$

wherein

f1 designates the focal length of said negative first lens group;

f3 designates the focal length of said positive third lens group; and

fw designates the focal length of the entire the zoom lens system at the short focal length extremity.

4. (Original) The zoom lens system according to claim 1, wherein upon zooming from the short focal length extremity to the long focal length extremity, said negative first lens group monotonously moves toward said image, said positive second lens group monotonously moves toward said object, and said positive third lens group is made immovable with respect to the image plane; and

wherein said zoom lens system satisfies the following conditions:

$2.7 < |f1/fw| < 3.3$

$1.7 < f3/fw < 2.3$

wherein

f1 designates the focal length of said negative first lens group;

f3 designates the focal length of said positive third lens group; and

fw designates the focal length of the entire the zoom lens system at the short focal length extremity.

5. (New) A zoom lens system comprising a negative first lens group, a positive second lens group, and a positive third lens group, in this order from an object,

wherein said negative first lens group comprises a negative meniscus lens element having the convex surface facing toward said object, and said positive third lens group comprises a positive biconvex lens element;

wherein upon zooming from the short focal length extremity to the long focal length extremity, said negative first lens group monotonously moves toward said image, said positive second lens group monotonously moves toward said object, and said positive third lens group is made immovable with respect to the image plane;

wherein a diaphragm is provided on the object side of said positive second lens

group, and moves integrally therewith; and

wherein said zoom lens system satisfies the following conditions:

$0.25 < R1/D1 < 0.55$

$0.25 < f2/TL < 0.45$

$2.7 < |f1/fw| < 3.3$

$1.7 < f3/fw < 2.3$

wherein

R1 designates the radius of curvature of the image-side surface of said negative meniscus lens element, which constitutes said negative first lens group;

D1 designates the distance between said negative first lens group and said positive second lens group at the short focal length extremity;

TL designates the distance along the optical axis from the most object-side surface of said negative first lens group to the most image-side surface of said positive third lens group, at the short focal length extremity;

f1 designates the focal length of said negative first lens group;

f2 designates the focal length of said positive second lens group;

f3 designates the focal length of said positive third lens group; and

fw designates the focal length of the entire the zoom lens system at the short focal length extremity.

6. (New) The zoom lens system according to claim 5, wherein said positive second lens group comprises a positive lens element having a convex surface facing toward said object, and cemented lens elements having a positive lens element and a negative lens element, in this order from said object,

wherein the most image-side surface of said positive second lens group comprises a divergent surface; and

wherein the zoom lens system satisfies the following condition:

$0.5 < R2/fw < 1.0$

wherein

R2 designates the radius of curvature of the most image-side surface of said positive second lens group.